
OLR Bill Analysis

sSB 203

AN ACT CONCERNING A STATE-WIDE SEXUAL ABUSE AND ASSAULT AWARENESS PROGRAM.

SUMMARY:

This bill requires, by January 1, 2015, the Department of Children and Families, together with the departments of Education and Social Services and Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services, Inc., or a similar organization, to identify or develop a statewide sexual abuse and assault awareness program for use by regional and local school boards. The State Board of Education must implement the program in each public school by July 1, 2015.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2014

SEXUAL ABUSE AND ASSAULT AWARENESS PROGRAM

The program must include:

1. instructional modules for teachers;
2. age-appropriate educational materials for grades two through five, which the Department of Education (SDE) must make available on its website; and
3. a uniform child sexual abuse and assault response policy and reporting procedure.

Under the bill, the instructional modules must include training on preventing, identifying, and responding to child sexual abuse and assault. The age-appropriate materials for students in grades two through five may include (1) warning signs a child victim might exhibit and (2) resources to further student, teacher, and parental education and outreach.

The response policy and reporting procedure may include:

1. actions child victims may take to get help,
2. intervention and counseling options for child victims,
3. access to educational resources to help child victims succeed in school, and
4. uniform procedures for reporting instances of child sexual abuse and assault to school staff.

Exemptions from Program

The bill allows students in grades two through five to opt out of the awareness program or any part of it if the student's parent or legal guardian so notifies the school board in writing. School boards must provide exempt students with opportunities for study or schoolwork when the student would otherwise be participating in the program.

Legislative History

The Senate referred the bill (File 38) to the Education Committee which favorably reported it. The Senate then referred the bill to the Appropriations Committee, which favorably reported a substitute bill requiring SDE to make available on its website the age appropriate educational materials for students in grades two through five.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Committee on Children

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 12 Nay 0 (03/04/2014)

Education Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 28 Nay 0 (04/02/2014)

Appropriations Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 44 Nay 0 (04/15/2014)